THE

EDUCATION OF THE NEGRO

ITS RISE PROGRESS AND PRESENT STATUS:

BEING AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

AT ITS LATE MEETING AT CHAUTAUQUA, N. Y.,

BY

HON. GUSTAVUS J. ORR, LL.D.,

STATE SCHOOL COMMISSIONER OF GEORGIA.

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ADDRESS.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I come before you to-night to discuss a subject of the deepest public concern; and I am happy to know that my audience is composed of persons with minds broadened by culture, liberalized by learning and capable of weighing properly whatever may be advanced. I am happy, moreover, to believe that sufficient time has now elapsed for reason to begin to assert her sway, and that men of all sections of our common country are now prepared to hear with candor. This I shall expect of my present audience; and I do not believe I shall be disappointed. I promise on my part to exercise the same candor which I look for in you.

African slavery, either fortunately or unfortunately, was introduced into the colony of Virginia in the year 1620—two hundred and sixty years ago. Soon after, this example was followed by the other colonies; and not a great many years had elapsed before every one of them became slaveholding. The laws of climate, the laws governing the remunerativeness of negro labor, and other influences caused slavery soon to begin to gravitate Southward; and this movement continued till at the time the colonies declared themselves independent in 1776, the great bulk of the five hundred thousand negroes then in the country were to be found in the Southern States. The existence of slavery in the South formed the basis of a civilization in that section entirely distinct in many particulars from that found in the Northern portion of the Union. It early became evident that, as in the celebrated instance recorded in sacred history, two nations, as it were, were struggling to the birth.

The difference in social influences, the difference in moral teachings, the difference in interest, the differences in the theories of the constitution generally held in the two sections, and, indeed, the difference in the entire surroundings separated very widely the two peoples. Each section misunderstood the other in a hundred particulars; and the obstacles to a better understanding constantly grew in magnitude as time moved on. The terrible war which followed, in which men of a common origin, priding themselves in a common history, cherishing the same glorious traditions, and of equal bravery met in deadly strife, —I do not propose to trace. Would that the horrors of that fearful period could be buried forever in oblivion, or, if remembered at all, that they might be recalled only for the useful lessons which they teach! I do not refer to the subject to-night for the purpose of locating

the blame of the fratricidal strife,—for Heaven knows there was wrong enough on both sides. I have to do, rather, with the harmless race who were the innocent cause of the unhappy struggle and of all the terrible sufferings which it entailed. Was it a mercy to that people that they were brought to these shores and subjected to so many long years of servitude? Was it one of the purposes in the Divine mind to prepare them, by the stern discipline of slavery, for something better? Was slavery, indeed, the divinely-appointed tutelage by which they were to be brought forward to a higher plane of civilization? These are questions which deserve our thoughtful consideration, now that we have reached the period of calm, philosophic reflection. In order to give them a proper anwer, let us first consider the condition of the race in their native home; and, secondly, the influences, civil, social, and religious, brought to bear upon them in their long period of slavery. We shall thus be led to see that slavery was a great educator, perhaps the greatest and most wisely conceived that could have been devised.

As to the low condition of the Negro tribes near the western coast of Africa, whence the former slaves of this country were originally brought, all authorities are agreed. They were simply savages, practising Fetichism, the very lowest form of idolatry. They were the slaves of the most degrading superstitions, believing in spells, charms, and incantations, and having no system of rules of conduct deserving the name of a moral code. In regard to their intellectual condition, one author says, "It is impossible to name a region tolerably peopled, where any progress at all has been made in the arts, which is so completely illiterate as Negro Africa. It is not enough to say that it has neither books, authors, nor learned men. In no part of this extended region is there an alphabet or a heiroglyphic, or even a picture, or symbol of any description. All those refined processes by which the ideas of one mind are to pass into the minds of others are entirely unknown."*

Now, I say nothing of the manner in which these Africans were introduced into this country, or of the motives of those who introduced them. With matters of this kind, this discussion has nothing to do. I simply put this question: Suppose a population of the kind above described had been set down in considerable numbers in the midst of a community well advanced in Christian civilization, and a body of wise, philanthropic men had been convened to consider and report upon the question as to what should be the relations of this new population to the community in which they had been introduced, what conclusion do you suppose would have been reached? Would they have advised that these strangers be incorporated into the body politic with rights equal to those of other citizens? It seems to me that, intelligence and virtue being the recognized foundation stones of liberal government, the wise men supposed, even looking to the interest of the new comers alone, would have advised a probationary tutelage hedged about with salutary restraints, and backed by the strong arm of power. The ablest writers on government of modern times, with all the lessons of the past before them, and enjoying all the advantages of the advanced thought of the age, have taught us that governments must be arbitrary or liberal, stronger or milder, according as the people to be governed are ignorant or intelligent, of feeble or strong moral principles. The wise men supposed, in making the recommendation suggested, would have been but conforming to these well known teachings of our philosophic thinkers. Now, the condition to which the

*Encyclopedia of Geography.—*Murray*.

slaves of the South were ultimately advanced did not differ very largely from the supposed condition advised by the hypothetical wise men. The slavery of the South was often denounced by Northern writers and speakers as *chattel* slavery, and many persons throughout that section doubtless fully believed that slaves were treated, under the law, simply as things. No greater mistake was ever committed. The slavery of the South was very far removed from absolute or pure slavery. I hope you will allow one reared in the midst of the things which he describes, to speak freely and frankly to you of what has been familiar to him from childhood. I think, perhaps, that I shall be able to show you that the relation of the slave of the South to the society of which he formed a part, whether so intended or not was really that of a species of inchoate citizenship. It was a state of slavery, indeed, but a slavery with many benign modifications. The three great absolute rights of Englishmen—rights which belong to all to whom English institutions have descended as an inheritance—are, according to Blackstone, the right of personal security, the right of personal liberty, and the right of private property. While it is not pretended that the Southern slave was permitted to enjoy these rights in the sense in which you understand them, yet I propose to show that he did enjoy them all in a modified sense. I am not a lawyer, and therefore do not feel myself capable of presenting a professional view of this part of my subject; nor do I think that a presentation of that kind would be appropriate or interesting to an audience such as the one before me. I hope, however, that I shall be able to give such a view, though unprofessional, as shall make good before you the declarations made.

"The right of personal security consists in a person's legal and uninterrupted enjoyment of his life, his limbs, his body, his health, and his reputation :" so says the authority just referred to. In a state of absolute or pure slavery the subject of it is divested of this right in all its specified details. In the slavery of the South, it was secured to him by legislative enactment in most of the particulars enumerated. The murder of a slave was punished with death; and the maiming of him was visited with very heavy penalties. Indeed, resistance to the infliction of these wrongs by a slave, even to the homicide of him seeking to do them, was considered by our law as justifiable. An examination of our Southern codes will further show that all other injuries done to the person, not amounting to deprivation of life or limb, such as assaulting, beating, wounding, etc., when done to slaves were made penal. It is true that the master had the right to correct his slave for disobedience, idleness, petty theft, quarreling, fighting, or other offense of a sufficiently serious character; but for all cruelties, or needless and wanton punishments inflicted by masters severe penalties were provided; and so tender was our law of the rights of the helpless slave, that in a contest with his master it was made the duty of the court to assign him competent counsel. For injuries done the reputation of the slave no redress was provided; but even this omission was not without its reason as one of the main grounds for providing redress in such cases, viz., the injury done to one's business and the consequent abridgment of his means of support, did not exist at all in his case.

The second great right of the citizen, the right of personal liberty, "which consists in the power of locomotion, of changing situation, or moving one's person to whatsoever place one's own inclination may direct, without imprisonment or restraint, unless by due course of law" it was not even sought to guarantee to the southern slave by leg-

islative enactment. The main design of slavery being to secure to the master the services of the slave, the theory of the institution seemed to require that the former should have the right of directing and controlling the movements of the latter, and the law was so framed as to secure him in this right. Almost universal usage, however, required that this right should be exercised in kindness and mercy; and in a thousand ways the theoretical rigor of the law was abated in practice. The very largest liberty of locomotion compatible with the ends of slavery and the best interests of the community as constituted was allowed by all humane masters to slaves who were faithful and who could be trusted. It may be further added that while the master had the right to control the liberty of the slave, no other person could do so with safety; for the master was the legally recognized protector of the slave and always appeared upon the scene when an unlawful attempt was made to interfere with the personal liberty of the latter, either to enforce such legal remedies as were provided or to extemporize remedies of his own where the law had provided none. One good effect of this control exercised by masters—good in its influence upon the slave—stands out and is patent to every observer, now that slavery has been abolished. I refer to the habits of industry thus generated. Observers from other portions of the Union, Southern men, and even the former slaves themselves, all unite in bearing testimony to the fact that the freedmen trained up in the days of slavery are far more industrious, much more thrifty, and far better laborers than those who have grown up under the influences of their newly obtained freedom.

It remains now to consider the last of the three great absolute rights of the citizen, viz., The right of private property, which has been said to consist "in the free use, enjoyment, and disposal of all his acquisitions, without any control or diminution, save only by the laws of the land." This right, like the last considered, did not belong at all to the slave under the law. All the acquisitions of the slave, of every kind, vested in and belonged to the master, who could use them and dispose of them in whatsoever manner seemed to him best. This is the way theory put it. There is a law, however, in the presence of which opposing human enactments have, in all countries, and in all ages of the world, been impotent. I allude to the law of a generally received, well established public opinion. What the commonly received opinion requires to be done, in any community, is always done in the absence of laws which require it, and even in the face of such as forbid. The general sense of all communities in the South required that the slave have the right to the full enjoyment of acquisitions made in time allowed him by custom, or in time specially granted to him; and depriving him of these acquisitions on the part of the master would have been universally regarded as an act of ineffable meanness. No man could do such a thing in the face of the outraged sense of right in the community. In practice, the condition of our slaves in respect to the wants usually supplied by the full enjoyment of the right of property was far better than that of the laboring poor in many free communities. In the first place, the supply of all their physical wants was assured Their masters were required by the law to furnish them with a sufficiency of wholesome food and comfortable raiment, and to support them in infancy, in sickness, and old age. The law requiring this was enforced by heavy penalties, and the records of the courts in my own State will show, within my own knowledge, that these penalties have been enforced with the approval of entire communities. In addition to this sure support, it was a universal custom for planters to assign certain plots of ground to their slaves, giving to each the usu-

fruct of the part assigned him, and the time, work-animals, and agricultural implements necessary for its cultivation. It was a common thing for the slaves to realize from the sale of the produce of these plots of ground from ten to one hundred dollars each, and, in rare instances, these annual accumulations have been known to reach several hundred dollars. Slaves were now and then permitted also to own a few swine, some fowls, and sometimes a cow. Their right to these little acquisitions was considered sacred, and any disposition made of their effects by verbal will was most religiously executed. Even as I now speak, one dusky face comes up before me, the face of an humble playmate of my childhood, who, in the days of slavery, returned from a neighboring State to receive at the hands of my good step-mother, acting as voluntary executrix, a considerable sum of money and other effects left him by the nuncupative will of his dying mother. But I need say nothing further on this head.

I will next speak briefly of the educational effect upon the slaves of the social life of the South. I feel conscious of my inability to give to those who were not of us a thoroughly true view of the domestic and social relations subsisting between the slaves of the South and their masters. Perhaps I can make the nearest approach to this by throwing together a number of seemingly disjointed particulars, trusting to the effect which they may produce as a whole. The domestic government prevailing upon the plantations was largely patriarchal. All differences among the slaves, and all minor offences even, such as would now be referred to the courts, were brought before the master for adjudication, and were patiently heard and determined by him, and with much more of justice than can often be reached, in the present condition of things, before the civil tribunals. In cases of sickness, the very best medical aid was summoned, and the mistress of the household often administered the medicines in person, ordered such delicacies as might be needed, saw that necessary attendance was furnished, and frequently, in extreme cases, watched in person through the weary vigils of the night, with the tenderest solicitude, by the humble bedside of the sufferer. Throughout the hill country of the South, embracing nearly one-half of that extensive territory, the labors imposed on the slaves were light; and the farms yielded but little, if anything, more than a support, the owners relying for their profits solely upon the natural increase of their slave property. The boys, white and colored, hunted and fished together, and mingled in the same rural sports with great freedom, the former, however, always exacting a deferential obedience and respect, which the latter were taught, from the very cradle, by their seniors of both races, to yield. The colored youth could not fail thus to take on some of the bearing, to imbibe some of the spirit, and to acquire, to some extent, the moral tone of his white associate. In like manner, female domestics, by rendering service in families of culture, often acquired much of the refinement of those upon whom they attended, and, by having a good example constantly before them, learned much as to the proper use of the English language. From the intercourse between young masters and mistresses and their domestics, as I have sketched it, ties of the tenderest affection and life-long in duration were often formed.

Among the educational agencies brought to bear upon the slaves of the South, I speak, lastly, of the influence of the labors of the various Christian churches among them. In these labors all the churches of the South took a very deep interest. Among these churches I may mention, of my own knowledge, the Protestant Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Baptist, and the Methodist, as being especially active. I

cannot, perhaps, in any other way give you as correct a view of the character and extent of this work as by stating certain great facts. I may say, then, that it was the universal custom of all the churches of the South to receive slaves into full and regular membership, that the spiritual welfare of the colored church members was looked after with great solicitude by the official members of the different churches; that the slaves and their masters worshipped in the same houses, the only distinction being that different portions of these houses were assigned for occupancy to the two races; that, at the holy communion, they partook of the same elements, administered by the same hands, at the same time, but always at different tables; that the ministers were universally expected to visit and labor with the slaves pastorally, administering to them the consolations of our holy religion in sickness and burying them when dead; that, in many places, special services, at least once on the Sabbath, were appointed for the exclusive benefit of the slaves: that very generally Sabbath schools were established for the religious instruction of the slaves in which they were taught orally from catechisms carefully prepared by the ablest divines of the different denominations, such men, for instance, as Dr. Winkler, of Charleston, from among the Baptists, Dr. Jones, of Georgia, of the Presbyterians, and the sainted Bishop Capers, of South Carolina, from among the Methodists; and, lastly, that it was the custom on many of the plantations for cultivated Christian mistresses to assemble, with their own smaller children, the younger servants of the household on the afternoon of the Sabbath, and to read to them and expound the sacred oracles, and drill them catechetically for the purpose of fixing in their memories the precious truths therein inculcated. I had hoped to be able to give you statistics, showing the scope, the extent, and the character of this great work. In this I have been disappointed, as I have found it impossible to procure the necessary records from which to obtain the requisite data. I find, however, in the life of the late Bishop Capers certain definite information in respect to the Misssionary work of the Methodist church among the slaves in the State of South Carolina. I will occupy your time with only two or three great facts from this record. The good Bishop's heart was early touched with Christian sympathy for the colored people, and he ceased to feel and labor for their welfare only when he ceased to live. But to the facts. At the earnest solicitation of this good man, the South Carolina Conference sent two of their number, for the first time, to labor as Missionaries to the blacks on the southern plantations in the year 1829. At the time of the Bishop's death, in 1855, there were twenty six colored missionary stations in South Carolina alone, comprising a membership of 11,546, served by thirty-two missionaries; and the annual revenue raised for the support of these missionaries had reached, that year the large sum of $25,000. The Methodists in Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana did, their respective circumstances considered, about as well. The effective work of the same kind done by the Baptists did not, perhaps, fall a whit behind that of their Methodist brethren, while the Presbyterians, Episcopalians and other Protestant churches did less, in the aggregate, only because they were weaker numerically and financially. Eternity alone will disclose in full the grand results of these heroic Christian labors by the devoted men and women of the South.

You now have before you the educationary agencies brought to bear upon the negroes in the days of slavery. The education thus imparted was not an education of books, taught in ordinary schools, under regularly employed teachers. Large numbers of the best men

of the South believed that this latter kind of education ought to have been superadded. We did not believe that any man ought to be denied intelligent, unaided access to the sacred Scriptures, out of which he must at the final day be judged, or to the statutes of the State to which he was held amenable; but views of public policy and of what, in my opinion, it was erroneously believed the public safety demanded, prevailed, and the education of books was withheld. The education, however, which was imparted was an education of habits of industry, of habits of obedient subordination, of habits of reverence for authority, human and Divine. Its fruits have been seen in a hundred forms. They are seen in the evident fact that the negroes, as a race, were far advanced in the arts of civilization during slavery—in the fact that considerable numbers of the men had become good farmers, good carpenters, good shoemakers, good blacksmiths, good tailors, good artizans, in short, in most of the ordinary branches of useful industry; and in the fact that many of the women had become first-class cooks, seamstresses, house servants, laundry women, etc. It was seen, further, that large numbers of them had become members of the various Christian churches; and notwithstanding their defective views of morals in some particulars, considerable numbers of these church members were orderly in their walk and gave unmistakable evidence of genuine piety. The most striking evidence, however, of the good results of the *ante bellum* educationary methods pursued in respect to the negro was furnished during the late civil war. When the the South was largely over-run by a hostile soldiery, when every able-bodied white man of that section had been hurried to the front, when none were left for the protection of our women and children but mere boys and infirm old men, our slaves cultivated our fields, protected our property, and stood by our families in their helpless condition; thus becoming an element of strength instead of weakness, of security rather than danger. History nowhere furnishes a more striking proof of the effectiveness of the methods of education pursued toward a people.

I have sometimes been asked by my Northern friends if the slaveholders of the South, in peaceful and quiet times, did not occasionally feel qualms of conscience in respect to their connection with the institution. I answer that we did not. We inherited the institution of slavery and could not have got rid of it if we had desired. We saw it protected in the fundamental law; and when we opened our Bibles we read in the Old Testament that God himself commanded his chosen people to make slaves of the heathen captured in war and to transmit them as an inheritance to their children; and when we turned to the New we saw that our Saviour did not condemn the slavery by which he was surrounded; and that those left by him to propagate the religion which he came more fully to expound, left on record rules for the government of both master and slave (for so I translate *doulos*), in their intercourse with each other, without uttering a word of condemnation. I do not say that we were right in these views, for I do not propose to re-open the argument upon a subject now forever settled practically. I simply affirm that we were honest. We would not be worthy of the respect of honest men if we had not been. Whether slavery was right or wrong, the slaveholder who stood in his lot, doing his duty as he saw it, ought to stand acquitted before men, as I am assured he does in the high court above.

I have already said enough, perhaps too much, upon the first stage of the progress of the negroes of the South. I come now to speak of the new era which has dawned upon us. The four long years of fratri-

cidal slaughter, which had filled the whole land with blood and every house with mourning, were at length ended, and with them slavery was also at an end. No road could have conducted to this result but that which led through blood and fire. But the result was reached. The doom of the institution was sealed, and "*tekel*" was written upon it. It soon began to seem as if it had but run the brief career intended for it in the beginning. Providence, like prophecy, is a thousand fold better interpreted as we look back upon it in the past than when we attempt to scan its future purposings. Men, who had hitherto looked upon the institution of slavery as intended by the Divine Mind to be perpetual, soon began to suspect that the purpose was to make it simply disciplinary from the beginning. To trace this surmise from the stage of the conjectural till it ripened into firm conviction in the minds of many of our best thinkers, would constitute a pleasing psychological study; but the work before me is practical, and it will be far more profitable and instructive, perhaps, to trace the difficulties through which the white people of the South had to pass before they had obtained their full consent for the negro to go forward from the education of habits, of kindly influence and of oral methods to the higher education of books and of whatever is opened up to the mind therein; and this I shall now attempt to do.

It will be recollected that under the reconstruction policy of President Johnson, the principal thing required of the Southern States, in order to their restoration to their former relations to the federal government, was to call conventions and formally acquiesce in the abolition of slavery. The right to frame their own fundamental law as to other particulars, and to fashion their own institutions, was fully conceded. Outsiders are but poorly prepared to appreciate the great hardship of acceding to the condition in respect to the abolition of slavery. It required Southern men to give up the firm conviction of their minds —a conviction which had become a part of their religious faith—that slavery was a Divine institution and intended to be perpetual. It involved the sacrifice of property which had always been protected by the sacred guaranties of the Constitution, and which, in many cases, constituted the accumulations of a lifetime. It was the passing from affluence to poverty, from a life of ease and plenty to a life of privation and hardship; from honor, as it appeared in the eyes of many, to dishonor. The people, however, rose to the requirements of the emergency, and the sacrifice was made with cheerfulness and resignation. The Southern States generally called conventions, as required, and made the change in the fundamental law which was demanded.

This reconstruction, which, at the time, was considered a finality, was hardly consummated before it was followed by the Congressional plan which contained much harder exactions. The new reconstruction set aside all that was done under the presidential plan, established temporary military governments, enfranchised the recently liberated slaves and disfranchised perhaps a third of the white citizens, including large numbers of the best men among us, required the calling of new conventions the delegates to which were to be chosen by the constituency created under the act forming the plan, while the conventions thus to be called were notified in advance that, as a condition precedent to the exercise of future self-government, they must put all the changes above set forth into the fundamental law. The hardness of these terms which were clearly extra-constitutional and which rested for their validity solely upon the rights of the conqueror, was intensified by the fact that men from the States recenly hostile to us—not liberal, cultivated gentlemen like those before me—but, in many cases, very

bad men came down among us and took control of the newly created political neophytes for the purpose of using them to promote their own selfish ends. I do not refer to these things in any spirit of bitterness; for whatever of bitterness I may have felt, thank God, has long since given way to a better state of feeling. I refer to them simply from their necessary connection with my subject. Now I put this question to the intelligent audience before me. Is it surprising that among a proud-spirited people, a people that had gloried in their freedom, hot-headed men were to be found, who, in their desperation, were driven to acts of violence? There were such acts; but their number and atrocity have been magnified a thousand fold. Is it surprising that the feeling of bitterness toward the authors of this new plan of civil re-habilitation should have been transferred, to some extent, to the people whom the plan suddenly lifted from the condition of slavery to the condition not only of voters but of legislators and office-holders? It is very plain to all, now that the passions of the times have to a large extent subsided, that mistakes, grevious mistakes, were made. Candid northern men will now admit that the bestowal of the full rights of citizenship upon a people, ninety-nine out of every one hundred of whom were wholly illiterate, whose habits of subordination, however valuable they may have been in a state of slavery, constituted but a poor preparation for the exercise of the functions of freemen, was badly judged and entirely premature. It was a hazardous experiment and was relieved from fatal results, perhaps, only by the kindly feeling between the white and colored races, still subsisting to a considerable extent, which had been engendered and nurtured in the days of slavery. I know that the problem before the people of the North was a very difficult one, and that some allowance ought to be made on that account. I know, further, that it is but candid to admit that the hardness of the terms finally imposed upon the people of the South grew partly out of certain legislation, which was ill-judged and to some extent illiberal to the freedmen, by the State governments brought into existence under the presidential plan. It was further thought by northern men that the exercise of the right of suffrage was itself to some extent educational, and that the possession of the right was necessary to the freedmen in order to self-protection. I can readily understand how patriotic men, with inadequate views of the condition and character of the freedmen, and with minds, perhaps, insensibly, under bias, might have been led into the mistakes thus committed.

The conventions provided for in this second reconstruction assembled and did their work, and this work was universally ratified by the constituencies created for that purpose. All of the constitutions thus formed required the establishment of public schools, free to all the children irrespective of race. Legislatures were soon convened which passed laws for carrying this requirement into effect. There were great difficulties in the way of enacting and sustaining these laws and of putting them into successful operation, some of which you will be able, to some extent, to understand when I state them briefly.

It was known, in a general way, and universally felt that the destruction of property, during the war, had been immense. The exact losses, however, were not, at that time, known. The census of 1870 fully revealed them by showing that the aggregate value of all property in the fifteen former slave States had been reduced, in the preceding decade, to three-fifths of its entire amount, while the same reduction in the eight cotton States was shown to be to about three-eighths. The effect, on the public mind, of these immense losses,

which was rather increased than diminished by their vagueness, stood in the way of obtaining appropriations for any purpose

In the next place, our people knew nothing of the benefits of public schools and of their immense superiority in a hundred particulars, when adequately supported and wisely administered, to the best managed private schools. From the beginning, the latter had been the only educational agencies known to our people, the different States having done nothing for the education of the masses except to raise funds, from time to time, for the education of the poor. This mode of educating our children had, therefore, throughout all the past, been so thoroughly identified with all our usages as to have become, seemingly, almost an essential part of our social life. You will readily understand, then, how the difficulty of obtaining appropriations of money was enhanced when these appropriations were asked for a measure which was not only opposed to long standing usage, but which in the popular mind was of very questionable utility.

I might mention as additional difficulties the manner in which the new constitutions were put upon us, the fact that all the property and nearly all the intelligence belonged to the opponents of the new educational policy, and the further fact that more than half of the children to be provided for were children of parents owning nothing that could be taxed

Great as were these difficulties, there were among us those who endeavored to take a philosophic, statesman-like view of the situation. We saw that the organic law could be changed again only by the new constituencies that had been created—a fact that rendered change hopeless. It thus seemed clear that no steps would be taken backward. Those newly invested with all the rights of full citizenship were evidently destined to the perpetual enjoyment of these rights. We then began to consider how we could render the state of things by which we were surrounded more tolerable. We undertook to examine for ourselves the new school policy which had been inaugurated. We saw that by the superintendency, State and county, which it created, public attention would be turned to the subject of education, and thus a much wider interest would be awakened, much more thorough work would be done, and that this work would be done much more economically. We found out, further, that poor as we were, the best way to add to our wealth was to increase the number of educated, intelligent producers. We began, further, to ask ourselves such questions as these : Shall the million and a half of colored children of school age, destined hereafter to wield influence as citizens, be permitted to grow up in hopeless illiteracy ? Shall the one-third part of the white school population, children of parents now very nearly as poor as the freedmen, be left to the same fate ? Would not our institutions thereby be imperiled ? Can free governments exist at all with constituencies in proportions so large, debased, and illiterate ? Some of us, in calmly considering the arguments hinted at, and in seeking to find answers to the questions propounded, came to the conclusion that what had been done by our conventions in respect to the school policy had been wisely done. The conviction became very deep with us that, in the altered condition of our people, the only hope left us was to do all that could be done towards elevating the masses, irrespective of race; and this conviction we promptly followed out in earnest action. We went before the people and sought by tongue and pen to impress upon them the new views which had taken possession of our own minds. The results were marked. With the fundamental law on our side, we succeeded in keeping alive the feeble systems that had been inaugu-

rated, systems making no discrimination as to race. We not only kept them alive, but we succeeded in continually making small additions to their efficiency. By these means we continued to receive accessions to our strength, till at the end of the first decade after the second reconstruction, when new conventions were called, in which the old element of our population had full and entire sway, the public school policy was re-incorporated in the new constitutions, and these new constitutions were ratified by overwhelming majorities.

The adoption of these constitutions marks the era of the admission of the negro, with the free consent of the white race, to the full rights of citizenship, including the right to free education. The great moral revolution, which had been in progress for nearly two decades, was now fully accomplished. I have endeavored to show you the difficulties through which it was necessary to pass before this end could be reached. It only remains now for me to speak of educational results—of what has been actually accomplished. I may state, then, that we have made a brave beginning. While what we have done may not be anything to boast of in itself, yet, considered in the light of the surroundings, we are not ashamed of it. We have given to the negro in our constitutions and in our statutes equal educational rights. We have sought, in administering these statutes, to hold the balance evenly. I can say for myself that there is nothing in my official career of which I am prouder than the universal recognition of the truth of this statement in respect to my own administration by my colored friends in Georgia. Large numbers of our colored people have learned to read and to write and to make easy calculations. They have, moreover, been taught something of the history of this great country, and of the geography of this and other lands, and of the structure of the English language. In our cities, our schools are kept up from eight to ten months of the year; but in country places, the terms are necessarily short, being only from three to five months. What we do, however, for one race, the same we do for the other. I had hoped to give you full statistics of the work, and to this end corresponded with the superintendents of the fifteen former slave States, and also with the honored superintendent of the District of Columbia; but in this I am, to some extent, disappointed. Some furnished me full reports, some partial; others estimated, the enrollment of the races, in the last named cases, not having been kept separate. I select a few of the first, and give the figures:

In Virginia, beginning with the year 1871, the colored enrollment for successive years was as follows: 38,554, 46,736, 47,169, 52,086, 54,941, 62,178, 65,043, 61,772, 35,768. In South Carolina the same enrollment from 1870 has been, 15,894, 33,834, 38,635, 46,535, 56,249, 63,415, 70,802, 55,952, 62,120, 64,095. In Georgia, beginning in 1871 and omitting 1872, when there were no public schools, the same record reads, 6,664, 19,755, 42,374, 50,358, 57,987, 62,330, 72,655 while in Mississippi, beginning with 1875, the same figures were, 89,813, 90,178, 104,777, 111,796. The only year for which my correspondence enables me to present the grand aggregate for the entire South was the year 1878. The attendance for this year foots up the astonishing sum of 738,164, the reports being accurate for all the States except Arkansas, Florida, and Louisiana, in which, as already stated, careful estimates were made. When confronted by a record like the foregoing, achieved in the midst of the difficulties that beset us on every side, as a friend of the colored race I thank God and take courage!

You desire, doubtless, to hear something now in respect to the higher

education. In regard to this, I can give but few facts. Such are, I present them almost in the very words of my correspondent.

The State of Maryland appropriates $2,000 per annum for the support of a normal school for the training of colored teachers.

Virginia sets apart $10,000 per annum out of the proceeds of the land scrip donated by Congress for the support of the school at Hampton.

Claflin University, now united with the Colored Agricultural College, and located at Orangeburg, receives from the State of South Carolina $7,500 per annum.

Georgia pays out of her Treasury to Atlanta University $8,000 a year, in discharge of the equitable claim of the colored people to participation in the land scrip fund.

The average expenditure of the State of Mississippi upon the higher institutions for the education of the negro is about $10,000 per annum.

The new constitution of Louisiana, adopted in 1879, provides that the General Assembly shall establish in New Orleans a university for the education of persons of color, and make an annual appropriation for its support of not less than $5,000, nor more than $10,000.

Missouri appropriates $5,000 per annum to the Lincoln Institute, a school for the training of colored teachers.

In addition to what has been done by the States, very large sums have been expended by the American Missionary Society, the Freedman's Aid Society, the Baptist Home Missionary Society, and other charitable and religious associations of the Northern States, for founding and sustaining higher institutions of learning for colored youth. I have not the facts before me which would enable me to go into details as to what has been accomplished by all these agencies. I know that many of these institutions are doing valuable work. I have myself witnessed examinations in Atlanta University upon the higher branches of study which were creditable alike to both pupils and instructors; and I am in frequent receipt of letters from colored men and women which, in respect to orthography, punctuation, construction of sentences, and the other requirements of ordinary epistolary writing, would compare favorably with other writings of that class. I am satisfied that the colored race, through the agency of these higher institutions, is making decided progress.

I have now finished the work of this hour. I have sought to trace the progress of the colored race from the state of barbarism in which they reached these shores to their present greatly elevated and improved condition. I have endeavored to point out the various agencies that contributed to their advancement even when in a state of slavery. I have tried to place in a clear light the almost super-human difficulties which had to be encountered and removed in bringing them through the recent stages of their progress, and I have stated honestly and fairly what progress has actually been made. Whether they shall ever be prepared, in mass, for the intelligent, efficient, satisfactory discharge of the functions of citizenship is a question. I believe they *will*, in spite of the mistakes that have been committed, if the States, the general government and the various Christian churches shall do their full duty in the matter. That overruling Providence which has shaped the events of the past will not abandon them, or us, if we act like true men and Christians. In view of the mode of their introduction among us, and of the condition in which they were so long kept by laws sanctioned by the representatives of the entire people, and of the manner in

which their emancipation was effected, we of the South believe that the duty of providing the means of preparing them for citizenship belongs to the whole country. We ourselves, however, have a duty to perform which we do not intend to shirk. I think I can speak for the entire South, when I say that we are determined to stand by all that has been done. They have been declared free: to this we most heartily consent. They have been admitted to all the rights of citizenship : in this we acquiesce. Our State constitutions and our laws have declared that they shall be educated : to bring about this result we will do all that in us lies.